

Alphabet Soup at School

2 May 1985

Dr. Kitty Ferguson

ADD, attention deficit disorder was described in a previous column. BD stands for behavior disorder. This applies to children whose misbehavior interferes with learning and who have no other obvious reason for school problems. LD stands for learning disabled, is the most common of the three, and causes the most misunderstanding.

A person is considered learning disabled when they have much more difficulty mastering certain skills than others. The disability may affect a particular field such as mathematics or reading or it may affect a specific ability such as seeing letters in sequence or being able to write down correctly what's in your

brain. Obviously some learning disabilities will effect only limited areas of school performance. Others may make class work generally more difficult. It is important to remember that learning disabled people are bright and capable in all other areas.

Everybody has certain things they have more trouble with than others. In a broad sense we all have learning disabilities. I am LD myself. Obviously I am bright and capable in many areas or I wouldn't be doing what I do. On the other hand I am totally incapable of learning to read music! I have had lessons both as a child and as an adult. I have studied, practiced and cried in my efforts to master this field. I remember one music teacher

I had when I was 16 rapped my knuckles when I made a mistake because she was convinced I just wasn't trying! It is terribly frustrating to try really hard, fail, and then have people think you are lazy. It is even more discouraging for a bright child to be thought "dumb" because he can't learn to read.

Learning disabilities are diagnosed by psychological and educational testing. For example, a fourth grader with an IQ of 105 who is doing first grade math and fourth grade work in everything else would be considered learning disabled in math. Another LD child might be failing everything and tests show an IQ of 120, excellent understanding and knowledge but inability to read.

Nobody knows what causes

...the level of skill and craftsmanship that Adams brought to photography. Don't become overwhelmed though because much can be learned by looking at his work.

Viewing the work of master photographers is one way to improve our photographic skills. There comes a point when all the leading we do on photography becomes redundant. How many books and articles can we read on exposure, composition, lenses,

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...the same location though and expect to come away with an exact copy of the master's work. I guarantee you'll fall flat on your face. Rather than trying to make an exact copy, look at great photos with the idea of producing similar work of your own. With this attitude you won't be copying anyone. You will have established a new set of photographic goals.

One benefit of studying the work of others is the fresh ideas it gives us. Similar scenes will

We can do the same.

Think of an object, place, or person that you have looked at and thought would make a good photo. Consider what will be necessary as far as lenses, timing, and lighting go. Put it all together, then go out and shoot until you feel you have the image you want.

Do all this and then study and learn from your mistakes. You will then be following in the footsteps of masters like Ansel Adams.

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